



Morning birds are singing.



Chaz

 [cvillette](#)

<https://cvillette.livejournal.com/>

2008-01-19 23:01:00

MOOD: 😊 grateful

MUSIC: Indigo Girls - Starkville

Climbing is like cooking is like cop work is like life.

While you're learning, you flail and scrabble a lot, and generally make like a spider on the windshield of a car doing fifty.

Learning to do things the easy, elegant way--rather than any which way you can make it work--is part of learning to do them well.

And part of that is learning to see the easy way. And having the skills and strength and confidence to pull it off, once you figure out what you should do.

Also, if you're always working above your ability, you never feel like you've learned anything.

You know, I *could* have a cat.

if I had it at the office.

Bet the janitorial staff would love the hell out of that.



[locked] Dream Journal

All right, unconscious mind. We're coming to an accommodation. If the dreams are you cleaning

Elvis doesn't live here anymore.

Hey there. Sorry about the drama. It was... it was an emotional decision, and I didn't

Poppets.

Puppets. Poppet
puppets. Scary.




 [beatriceeagle](#)

[January 20 2008, 04:04:29 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

You ever play the piano? My teacher's making me learn theory, for that very reason. If you can see that what you're playing isn't just a bunch of notes, it's a broken chord progression, suddenly it's a whole lot easier to play.

This analogy should be taken with a grain of salt, since I think you gave me the Internet Flu, and I'm not necessarily entirely coherent.



 [cvillette](#)

[January 20 2008, 04:14:32 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

I never learned any music theory, no. But that's a good point, and yes, sort of what I'm talking about.



 [cvillette](#)

[January 20 2008, 12:43:08 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Also, I'm very sorry about the Internet flu. I thought I was over being contagious.



 [jadegirl](#)

[January 20 2008, 04:35:09 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

It's not like the janitorial staff thinks you're all a little odd or anything.....)



 [trollcatz](#)

[January 20 2008, 04:56:06 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

We hardly ever leave them anything weird to clean up!

Okay, except for emptying Duke's wastebasket. There could be anything in there.



 [ge2](#)

[January 20 2008, 14:41:19 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

I think, were I said staff of sanitation engineers, that I'd spring for a good supply of cheap wastebaskets and just give Duke a new one whenever the old one (1) appeared to be filled up or (b) gave visible/audible/aromatic evidence of needing to Go Away Now, Thank You Kindly.




 [carla_scribbles](#)

[January 20 2008, 05:32:04 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

... why am I thinking about the bunch of you with a little feline mascot tiptoeing around the office and napping on the file folders?

And why is it the cutest thing ever?



 [cvillette](#)

[January 20 2008, 12:43:47 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Because everybody on the internet is addicted to cats?



 [ge2](#)

[January 20 2008, 14:38:17 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

takes the Fifth



[colomon](#)

[January 20 2008, 13:02:33 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Perhaps it's just a quirk of mine, but in addition to what you describe, I've found that my initial successes at learning a new thing make me supremely self-confident at it. Then as I learn more, that undeserved confidence fades. Tears or even decades later, I'm much better at doing that thing, but my confidence has never returned to the level I had with that early flush of success.

Like making pizza. I remember when I first learned to do it reasonably well, nearly twenty years ago now. It felt kind of like angels descended from on high and anointed me pizza-maker; certainly I gained that reputation with my family and friends. All these years later, I've learned so much more about making them -- refined my recipe for crust, learned that using half as much of it works better, learned to use fresh tomatoes and real cheese instead of supermarket crap, etc. At the same time, my confidence in my skills has returned to sensible levels. I've learned there are lots of different ways to make pizza, different schools of thought, and I've only worked in one of them, and not fully mastered it yet.



 [cvillette](#)

[January 20 2008, 13:08:48 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

I am trying to invent some clever way to phrase a joke about your pizza kung fu and my pizza kung fu, and you know what? I'm just not awake enough yet this morning.

So I leave it to you to write your own, and hope it's true that it's the thought that counts.



[colomon](#)

[January 20 2008, 17:53:51 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

That's why I didn't use whistle as an example -- too easy to make jokes about it.

After thinking about it, I'm sure not everyone is like me on this front. I know I've run into people who never seem to get that early rush of confidence; and people who never seem to lose it, and run around half competent but fully cocksure.

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[matociguale](#)


[January 20 2008, 18:14:39 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Funny synchronicity. I've been thinking about beginner mind a lot lately, and my understanding of it was accepting that you don't know everything and never will, and that's okay.

Breathe in, breathe out. Move on.

Deleted comment



 [cvillette](#)

[January 20 2008, 18:54:45 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

It's Zen. It could be both at once.




 [matociguale](#)

[January 20 2008, 18:58:56 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

I think of it in terms of being in the moment and not overfreaking everything. Letting the right brain get its licks in, between all the thinky.

Something I need to learn right now.



 [colomon](#)

[January 21 2008, 13:00:05 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

I don't know. Doing a quick survey of google hits for "beginner mind", the Zen concept they are talking about seems different than what I am talking about. At least, they seem to be talking about it as an openness to try new things: 'Beginner's mind is just present to explore and observe and see "things as-it-is."' Whereas what I am talking about is what happens after that, when you've tried the new things and wrongly believe that you've mastered them. In the Fool metaphor, it's saying "See what a great flyer I am!" all the way down.

Using the example of me playing Irish traditional music, I'm not talking about that first year of fumbling experiments and successes. I'm talking about the next two years, when exposure to an environment that where I was one of the better players convinced me I really was good, and all I needed was to learn more tunes and I'd be a master. I didn't understand that I had no rhythm, no swing, no lift; I didn't even understand that those things were needed.

It seems like the effect is similar to the Zen beginner mind, the ignorance that lets you believe you can learn. But it's an egotistical ignorance rather than an innocent one.

Does that make any sense? Maybe that's drawing too fine a distinction, and from a distance, they look pretty much the same?

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